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THE SUMMER TANAGER

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One would think that the most obvious observation to be made of a very strikingly colorful bird would naturally be to readily recognize its brightly colored plumage. This was not the case, however, in my discovery of the fiery-red Summer Tanager. Upon arriving at the Wildcat Den State Park, which is located 15 miles northeast of Muscatine, my first impression was that of its call - a very distinctively loud and musical phrase. Upon scanning the tree from whence the sound was being emitted, I recognized the beautiful visage of the Summer Tanager. Here was a bird not only possessing a noteworthy song, but a striking appearance as well. Since this was a bird whose presence this far north is rather uncommon, I could not have found a better subject for my report.

The Summer Tanager, also known as the Summer Redbird, or Smooth-headed Redbird, might well be better remembered if one of the latter names were more often applied in its naming. The adult male is of a rosy-red plumage, as opposed to the vermilion hue of its cousin, the Scarlet Tanager. However, the male does not acquire this completely red visage until after its first year of growth. During its first year it is red above, but has a chrome-yellow or dull white coloration below. Immature males can also be patched above with red and green.

The male I observed was red above, but his underparts appeared as a dull white or gray, indicating he was an immature specimen about one year old. The female, as per usual in bird species, lacks the splendid beauty of the proud male. She is brownish-olive above and deep yellow below. This color combination remains quite the same throughout the female's lifetime.

In size the male and female appeared to be half way between that of a robin and a sparrow. The Summer Tanager has also been described as being one-fourth smaller than the robin. The adult has an overall length of from six to seven and one-half inches, and is rather thickset. Its bill is short to medium in length and is conical, being commonly hooked or notched. The tail is truncated or rounded, and the body is supported by short legs.

The ancestors of the Summer Tanager were Pan-American in origin. Thus it is not surprising to find this bird wintering in the tropics of South and Central America. Its winter range extends as far south as Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia, and as far north as the southern United States.

The Summer Tanager begins its northward migration in early spring and reaches the southern extremes of the United States early in March. It is one of the many small birds that migrates across the Gulf of Mexico to reach our southern coast. It is a nocturnal migrant and has been known to swarm into coastal parks, gardens, and woods, presenting a lavish display of color for those fortunate enough to witness the unusual and spectacular display of a bird whose singularity of appearance is considered rare in many places. The earliest birds reach the coast before the end of March, and the migration further northward begins in April, with the limits of the breeding range reached early in May. The breeding range extends from Florida and the Gulf northward to Delaware, Central Ohio, Southern Wisconsin, Southern Iowa, and Southeast Nebraska.

The records of the Summer Tanager's presence in Iowa are not too numerous. According to Du Mont (1934) Summer Tanagers were seen in the Des Moines area in 1889, and three nests were taken. Also, Lester Fagen found a nesting pair between 1903-1906 in Polk County. A pair of Summer Tanagers, taken by E. H. King near West Liberty, are now on display in the Coe College Museum. Unfortunately the MacBride Museum in Iowa City has no mounted specimens, although one can see the Scarlet Tanager on display.

The most recent record reveals considerable progress in the unfolding of the Summer Tanager's role in Iowa's bird panorama. On June 18, 1961, Fred Leshner, an S.U.I. graduate student, discovered a nesting pair feeding their young in the upper picnic area of Wildcat Den State Park. The following day the sighting was authenticated by Pete Petersen Jr. of the Davenport Public Museum. Excellent color slides by F. W. Kent and P. P. Laude were taken on June 20, and on the following day Edwin Meyer of Davenport recorded the movements of the Tanager family on colored movie film. Mr. F. W. Kent also reports that Joe Kennedy found a singing male during the week of June 20 in the Des Moines area. Mr. Kennedy has observed Summer Tanagers for the last 5 or 6 years, and reports having found some nests. I would like to acknowledge here that it was Mr. Kent who led me to the discovery of my subject.

After reaching its selected breeding ground, the Summer Tanager usually chooses an oak, pine, or hickory tree for its nest. Because of its solitary habits, it usually selects a secluded woodland area for its home. The nest I observed was in a white oak and was located near the end of a horizontal limb, which is characteristic of the nesting site. While the nest is most often 10 to 15 feet above the ground, I would estimate the height of this nest to be from 20 to 25 feet off the ground.

The female, whose quiet colors betray no nest secrets, collects twigs and grasses for the cradle to be saddled onto the horizontal branch, though in this work the male cautiously takes no significant part (Blanchan, 1916). The nest is of a fairly smooth contour and consists of stalks, bark, and leaves, with "pepper" grass stems a favorite material for the outer layer. The inside is usually lined with fine grasses. The nest usually measures 4 inches in diameter, 2 inches in height, and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in depth. The nest is quite well concealed, being small and surrounded by good-sized leaves. The nest I observed was constructed of the usual materials, but appeared to be somewhat larger.

Soon after the nest is built one can expect to find a set of three or four eggs. The eggs are ovate in shape and have a moderately glossy shell. The coloring is blue or bluish-green with olive-brown markings placed irregularly.

Rarely a set may partially lack the blue coloring and have instead a creamy white background with the usual brown markings. The measurements of 50 eggs averaged 23.1 by 17.1 millimeters with the extremes showing little deviation from the average (Bent, 1958). The eggs are laid at approximate 24 hour intervals.

During the 12 to 14 days of incubation the female sets on the eggs, with the male visiting her occasionally bringing a choice morsel of food.

There had been 3 or 4 young Tanagers in the nest I observed, but Edwin Meyer reported seeing a Blue Jay attacking the nest, and the Superintendent of Wildcat Den told me that he was certain all the young birds had been des-

troyed by the Blue Jays. Since the Summer Tanager rarely undertakes a second nesting, this couple would have to wait until next summer to raise a family.

Young Summer Tanagers very closely resemble their mother with a juvenile plumage as follows: above ruddy or yellow-tinged brown, wings deep olive-brown, tail bright olive-green; below dull white tinged with yellow, and abdomen distinctly streaked on the throat, breast, and side with deep olive-brown. Both sexes appear alike or nearly alike during the first winter, and do not appear distinctively different until after the following spring, when the male begins to display his bright red on the upper portion of his body. The male dons his full red suit by the end of the following summer.

Both parents share the responsibility of feeding the young. Summer Tanagers show a fondness for bees, beetles, wasps, tomato worms, spiders, dragonflies, and some fruits such as blackberries and whortleberries.

They have a particular fondness for bees and wasps, and have often been shot in southern states for killing so many bees that beehives were becoming unproductive. One observer watched a single Summer Tanager catch 15 to 20 bees within only a few minutes. This same observer, a beekeeper, shot and killed 8 of these birds in one day. He soon found his beehives were again "buzzing" with activity.

The song of the Summer Tanager has been described in various ways. I believe the phrase "pi-tuck" or "pik-i-tuck-i-tuck" is most suitable to its actual vocal expression. Dr. Chapman translates the call note as "chicky-tucky-tuk", a call consisting of five distinct syllables (Matthews, 1921). Its song consists of robin-like phrases which are similar to but far louder, better sustained, and more musical than that of the Scarlet Tanager. Later on in the summer it has an aggravating habit of joining in the chorus of other birds' songs, by which the pleasant individuality of its own voice is lost.

The Summer Tanager has a strong, swift, but not sustained flight pattern which it uses to good advantage in catching many flying insects. It is arboreal in habit and prefers to fly from treetop to treetop.

The solitary Summer Tanager is not much of a social climber and therefore seems to attract few enemies. Friedman lists the Summer Tanager as an "uncommon" host of the Cowbird. Its habits are much the same as those of the other members of the tanager family. It is very deliberate in its movement and prefers spending its time alone, concealed by the foliage of woodland trees, where it is surprisingly inconspicuous in spite of its eye-catching plumage. As I noted earlier, were it not for its voice, the Summer Tanager's presence would more often than not be overlooked.

The fall migration of the Summer Tanager begins early with reports indicating its arrival along the Gulf Coast in late August, continuing throughout September. After surviving the long, hazardous Gulf flight, it arrives in Central and South America in late September, continuing throughout October. During the long winter it frequents treetops of the dense forest and more sparse trees of pasture, plantation, and orchard of the tropics. In its winter quarters the Summer Tanager's way of living is similar to that of the summer, with the birds never forming flocks and remaining quite solitary and unsociable.

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SUMMER TANAGER AT NEST SITE

Photo by F. W. Kent

CORRECTION:—The note on the 1881 court case on page 23 of this volume was contributed by Mr. Ralph Velich of Omaha, Nebr.

A SURVEY OF WINTERING BALD EAGLES 1960-61

ELTON FAWKS

Route 1, Box 112
EAST MOLINE, ILLINOIS

Since I last reported on wintering eagles, *Iowa Bird Life*, 1960, Vol. XXX: 56-58, much additional data has been obtained. All this has been copied and sent to Alexander Sprunt IV, Research Director, National Audubon Society, who is in charge of the Continental Bald Eagle Study. It is far too early to draw definite conclusions at this early date. Interest in the eagle study is great and I feel that some of the material collected will be of interest. Several different facets of the expanding study will be reported here.

The study has two features, an all winter study and a one day count. The last one day count was taken at the fairly late date of February 19, 1961. Several interesting facts were apparent. The most important were the high count at the Savanna Ordnance Depot near Savanna, Illinois, and Bellevue, Iowa, and fact that we caught the Bald Eagles in migration.

Four stations were kind enough to send me daily counts close to the February 19th count. These showed the eagles leaving the areas. Robert L. Cook reported for Lock and Dam 20 at Canton, Mo: February 15, 1961, 18 adults, 2 immatures; February 16, 1961, 12 adults, 2 immatures; February 17, 1961, 10 adults, 0 immatures; February 18, 1961, 4 adults, 0 immatures; February 19, 1961, 2 adults, 0 immatures. Alois J. Weber reported for Lock and Dam 19, at Keokuk, Iowa: February 8, 1961, 109 adults, 24 immatures; February 11, 1961, 29 adults, 6 immatures; February 14, 1961, 30 adults, 3 immatures; February 20, 1961, none. O. J. Volley, Wisconsin Conservation Warden, Cassville, Wisconsin, reported that the main group departed February 15th. Kenneth Krumm, Refuge Manager, Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Mound City, Missouri, reports: February 16, 1961, 17 adults, 19 immatures; February 19, 1961, 7 adults, 11 immatures. The original wintering flock was between 58 (counted) and 70 (estimated), they were about 30% adults and 70% immatures.

There appeared to be a build up in the number of eagles at the Savanna Ordnance Depot. However this is not certain as the high count of February 20th, was an aerial count. Ground counts by several people showed the following: February 9, 1961, 80 adults, 4 immatures; February 14, 1961, 43 adults, 1 immature; February 18, 1961, 97 adults, 4 immatures; 5 unclassified; February 19, 1961, 34 adults, 4 immatures.

February 19, 1961, Report by Pools on Mississippi River

Lock and Dam No.	River Condition	Adults	Immatures	Total
11	Frozen	0	0	0
12 (Feb. 20)	Frozen	196	10	206
13	80% frozen	1	0	1
14	Open	3	0	3
15	Open	5	0	5
16	Open	1	0	1
17	Ice broken & moving.	100	7	107
18	Frozen	13	3	16
19	Frozen	4	1	5
20	Frozen	2	0	2
21		9	5	14
26		21	16	37
Total		355	42	397
Percentage		89.42	10.58	100

February 19, 1961 Bald Eagle Count by States

State	Number of Reports	Unclassified	Adults	Immatures	Total
Illinois	17	1	365	51	417
Indiana	3		0	0	0
Iowa	3		10	5	15
Kansas	3		0	0	0
Kentucky	2		3	2	5
Michigan	5+	1	35	5	41
Minnesota	None				
Missouri	3		17	14	31
Nebraska	7	18	27	31	76
Ohio	1		0	1	1
Oklahoma	1	20	0	0	20
Wisconsin	5		13	2	15
Totals	50	40	470	111	621
Percentage			80.9	19.1	

The eagles credited to Illinois were mostly found on the Mississippi River bordering some of the other states. Severe snowstorms in Wisconsin and Michigan held down the count. Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Nebraska had good coverage. Wisconsin had planned excellent coverage but the weather interfered. Only a few people had been contacted in the other states.

A drawdown in water level in Pools 14 and 15 caused the ice to leave and scattered the eagles. An earlier February date is suggested for the future. This should follow the Fish and Wildlife count that is taken in their annual waterfowl inventory. Eagles are now counted and aged in that count.

Apparently we caught the Bald Eagles in migration on our Tri-City Christmas Bird Count. In this count observers are stationed in zones and count eagles at one time. This years count was taken Dec. 26, 1960, between 10:00 and 11:00 A.M. A total of 91 Bald Eagles were found. At Lock 14 we counted 28 adults and 7 immatures. At 2:30 P.M. we were in an apple orchard in the hills near Lock 14 and after watching groups of from 6 to 18 eagles spiraling over from east to west (the way the Mississippi flows through our area) and counting one flock of 30 we hurried to the Lock and found 21 eagles still there. In these groups going over we probably saw more than were counted at the count time. The birds were circling slowly in giant spirals with the top birds nearly out of sight and the bottom ones still at considerable heights. These were rather tight circles. One adult eagle stood on its tail four times and remained flying in one spot for a few wing beats.

Data was collected for the entire winter. In last years report the Tri-City data was given. Adding Bald Eagles counted in winter of 1960-61 in chart form with the two winters previous reported we find the following:

Winter	Adults	Immatures	Total	% Adults	% Immatures
1958-59	487	103	590	82.5424	18.4576
1959-60	1123	204	1327	84.6237	15.3763
1960-61	675	102	777	86.8726	13.1274

The difference in numbers during the three winters cannot be an indication of any increase or decrease. In the first winter eagles were counted on 44 days, the next winter 75 days and this past winter 72 days. In the winter of 1959-60 we had earlier ice and a very late spring. More complete coverage was made in that winter. Some of the counts for last winter were over a smaller area than the winter of 1959-60.

A very interesting feeding pattern is starting to appear. Not enough data is on hand to prove or disapprove the following. In every report that has come in to date from anywhere where ducks and geese winter in large numbers, more immature eagles are noted. It is true that most of these places are south of the Tri-Cities. In some of these southern areas the immatures out-number the adults, in others the ratio is nearly even. In all reports from these areas the eagles fed on dead, wounded or captured ducks and geese. Along the Mississippi River where fish is the staple food item the number of immatures is declining in proportion to the number of adults. It could well be that part of our loss of the younger birds is due to increasing numbers of them in these duck wintering areas. In our area I have only once watched a Bald Eagle chase a gull to rob it of its food. Food is so easy to obtain that perhaps the adults become lazy and the younger, more adventurous birds go elsewhere. It also seems that the younger birds are found along the smaller streams and rivers. All this would influence the ratio of the count. For this reason the nation wide survey is needed to determine if our National Bird is actually declining as it appears.

A most interesting report comes in from Mr. Lee Bush, formerly of the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Carterville, Illinois. It shows the build-up of immatures in southern areas.

Winter	Adults	Immatures	Total	% Adults	% Immatures	Days sighted.
1956-57	7	4	11	63.64	36.36	7
1957-58	22	10	32	68.75	31.25	15
1958-59	15	28	43	34.88	65.12	13
1959-60	31	81	112	27.68	72.32	23
1960-61	23	107	130	17.69	82.31	18

A comparison between these figures and those for the Tri-City area is worthwhile and might be a pattern of what is happening over the nation. Only a few hints of this are now at hand. It will be most interesting to follow through on this point.

Under the leadership of Donald V. Gray, Refuge Manager, Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge, six regional managers reported the winter Bald Eagle count for the first and the second half of the wintering season. As the various pools show considerable contrast and the two halves also show contrast the summary in full follows: Pools 4, 5, and 6 Winona, Minnesota, to Nelson, Wisconsin, reported by Harvey G. Neilsen.

	Adults	Immatures	Totals	% Adults	% Immatures
10-8-60 to 12-17-60	54	15	69	77.00	23.00
1-19-61 to 4-22-61	37	40	77	48.00	52.00

Pools 7 and 8 La Crosse, Wisconsin, reported by Eric B. Lawson.

10-17-60 to 1-7-61	59	59	118	50.00	50.00
1-24-61 to 4-26-61	100	128	228	43.86	56.14

Pool 9, Lansing, Iowa, reported by Leroy W. Sowl.

9-20-60 to 1-14-61	71	23	94	75.53	24.46
1-3-61 to 4-18-61	94	36	130	72.30	27.70

Pool 10, Prairie Du Chien, Wisconsin, to Guttenberg, Iowa, reported by Victor M. Hall.

10-22-60 to 1-9-60	19	7	26+	73.00	27.00
1-9-61 to 4-1-61	99	21	120	82.50	17.50

Pool 11, Cassville, Wisconsin, to Bellevue, Iowa, reported by E. S. Crozier.

11-25-60 to 1-19-61	40	4	44	91.00	9.00
1-19-61 to 4-1-61	85	54	139	61.15	38.85

Pool 12, 13 and 14, Bellevue, Iowa, to Davenport, Iowa, reported by Herbert Troester.

10-6-60 to 1-9-61	151	5	156	96.80	3.20
1-9-61 to 4-22-61	415	23	438	94.75	5.25

Totals for the two sections of winter:

First Section: 394 adults, 113 immatures, total 507; percentage 77-70 to 22.30.

Second Section: 830 adults, 302 immatures, total 1132; percentage 73.32 to 26.68

Several people sent considerable data from Lock and Dam 19 at Keokuk, Iowa. Most of this information came from the following: Mr. W. J. Ingram, Mr. John Morris, Dr. T. E. Musselman, and Alois J. Weber. Results by months follows:

Month	Adults	Immatures	Total	% Adults	% Immatures
Dec. 1960	1104	128	1232	89.61	10.39
Jan. 1961	589	71	660	90.35	9.65
Feb. 1961	349	73	422	82.70	17.30
Totals	2042	272	2314	88.24	11.76

Mr. Ingram comments, "You will note that the concentration is greater when the temperature is low as we seldom see these birds in large numbers unless there is considerable shore ice extending some distance out into the river. Main item of food is fish, obtained in several ways from open water, usually along the edge of the ice apron and sometimes in the main channel by swooping down on a fish that comes close to the surface. Also, ducks quite often come to the surface with a fish too large to swallow, these slightly disabled fish are quickly taken by eagles." Mr. Ingram, in a letter to Peter Petersen, Jr. states, "Never saw them chase a gull or duck." He counted 121 Bald Eagles January 30, 1961, on one count and 112 on another the same day.

Dr. Musselman, Dr. Henry Harford, and Mr. Larry Moller in a combined report on eagles seen at Lock 19, 20, and 21 and points in between report for the period October 27, 1960, to February 19, 1961 - adults 102, immatures 23, total 125; adults 81.60% immatures, 18.40%. Mr. Robert L. Cook reports from Lock and Dam 20, 98 adults, 11 immatures, 109 total, 90% adults and 10% immatures.

Mr. Stanley Rhodes of Carthage College, Carthage, Ill., reports that the eagles leave the river at Keokuk about 5 P.M. and roost in the trees about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the river. He also reported 124 Bald Eagles seen in one count in the winter of 1958-59.

K. Duane Norman, Refuge Manager, Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge, Havana, Illinois for the period October 25, 1960 to February 22, 1961 reports: adults 62, immatures 40, total 102; adult 61%, immature 39%. He gives peak ratio for 1959 as 1:0.86 and for 1960 as 1:0.80. Waterfowl is the main food item, being obtained in open water holes. The eagles roost in trees along a creek and along main dike about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the feeding area.

In a letter of February 25, 1960, Mr. Robert V. Wade, formerly Regional Refuge Manager for Pools 12, 13, and 14, Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge gives these dates for the area from Dubuque, Iowa to Rock Island, Illinois:

Year	Arrival	Departures	Peak Number	Peak Date
1954-55	9-6	5-4	35	2-8
1955-56	9-20	5-20	70	2-28
1956-57	9-25	3-30	70	1-18
1957-58	8-7*	4-23	120	3-6
1958-59	9-24	4-25	120	2-21
1959-60	10-31**	100	12-10 (so far)

*Extremely early - seen on the river near Galena.

**Extremely late - eagles must have been here, but did not note.

Wade states, "As you see, the peak date usually occurs just as the ice on the river is breaking up. The peak number for 1954-55 was only on the Illinois side of the river".

Oliver J. Volley, Conservation Warden, Wisconsin Conservation Department gives these general statements in a letter May 8, 1961: "1. The wintering eagles feed primarily on fish in this area (Cassville, Wis.). 2. A very small portion is "robbed" from other birds. 3. Most of the food is dead or carrion, fish, calves, chickens, piglets, etc. 4. The birds routine patrol includes farm fields where manure and defunct small livestock is available. 5. I have only once observed the killing of wintering waterfowl by an eagle (a Common Merganser), but have witnessed hundreds of attempted kills by those birds. Our wintering waterfowl are mostly divers who escape easily by submersion. 6. The open water areas created by warm water from two electric generation plants here and the fishes killed (mostly small sheepshead and shad), provide food in abundance with a minimum of effort by the birds. This is an unnatural situation and the wilderness habits of the birds may be entirely different."

A few reports came from Iowa away from the Mississippi River, mostly from Forney Lake near Thurman, Iowa. These give a very favorable ratio, 18 adults, 31 immatures, 50 total; 38% adults and 62% immatures.

A few other favorable reports were received from several locations in Illinois, some of these follows: John F. Wanamaker, Elsah, reports from Marquette Park and Principia College: 24 adults, 47 immature, 71 total; 33.80% adults, 66.20% immatures. William E. Southern reports Dec. 29, 1960, from Cairo: 14 adults, 12 immatures, 26 total; 54% adults, 46% immatures. Robert J. Crist reports on a boat trip Jan. 17 and 18, 1961, from Havana to Pere Marquette State Park: 35 adults, 11 immatures, 46 total; 76% adults and 24% immatures.

Many other reports are on hand, some need additional data, some are being saved for next years survey, some are very similar to these presented here. These all will be processed in the future but not reported on here.

Future eagles study under the leadership of the National Audubon Society will include nesting studies and an all winter survey, also a one day count or a count in a short period of time, similar to the Christmas Count. This one day count will probably coincide with the Annual Waterfowl Count

carried out by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the state game agencies. Cooperators will be asked to supplement the professional counts. This, done yearly, will give the best index of both Golden and Bald Eagles. This count would be about January 7th each year with the date to be officially set later.

It is the writer's opinion that two counts are needed at least in the Mississippi Valley. Odd colored birds that we can safely say range greatly where the same birds were found at places 30 and 40 miles apart. It could well be that the wintering range of the individual Bald Eagle covers many miles. These odd colored birds would sometime be in one place for several weeks. When commercial fishermen make huge hauls under the ice and throw away the scrap fish a large number of eagles appear frequently.

A comparison between February 19th count and the Annual Waterfowl Count that was taken January 8 show large difference in total numbers of birds. Frank Bellrose reports as follows for Illinois: Mississippi River Valley.

	Adult	Immature	Total	% Adult	% Immature
Illinois River	169	43	212	80.00	20.00
Other Areas	30	11	41	73.17	26.87
Totals	5	7	12	41.70	58.30
	204	61	265	77.00	23.00

The total February 19th count for part of Illinois was 417, or 152 more Bald Eagles. When the complete summaries of areas in a letter from Marshall L. Stinnett, United States Game Management, Peoria, Illinois, is compared to just the partial coverage on the February count we have about 150 eagles to 417. However, the eagles seen by Wanamaker might be in area not covered by the Waterfowl survey. Also it is not possible to pinpoint all observation from the two counts for completely accurate comparison. It is apparent that we have some drift of birds during the winter or more coming down from Canada. Additional data is needed so with "Sandy" Sprunts permission and support the writer with Petersen will carry on a one day Mississippi River, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa count with other nearby states if plans can be worked out.

Several states are carrying on an eagle survey and then forwarding the data to the National Audubon Society. This system has merit as material can be compared sooner and published in the various journals. This will help to build up the study project. Among some exchanges Michigan sent the writer the following:

	No. of Bald Eagles reported	No. Aged	Adults	Imma.	% Adults	% Imma.
Upper Peninsula	71	69	63	6	91.3	8.7
Lower Peninsula	54	50	38	12	76.0	24.0
Mich. Total	125	119	101	18	84.9	15.1
S.W. Ontario	68	57	47	10	82.5	17.5
Survey Total	198	176	148	28	84.1	15.9

They state "the relatively low number of immatures reported from the Upper Peninsula is quite disturbing. All comments by residents and game people in the north agree that Bald Eagles in general and immatures in particular are getting scarcer." (Michigan Bald Eagle Survey, Bulletin #1, Winter 1960-61)

No attempt will be made to summarize all the data presented here. It is presented for students of our National Bird, the Bald Eagle, in the hope that others will give thought and time to this study. To carry on study of this type does take money as well as time. Florida Audubon Society has come up with an idea to help finance the study. A life membership is available for \$1.00 or more. If this money is sent to the writer or Peter Petersen Jr. we can keep one half here for study purposes. It is our hope that enough can be obtained to pay for analysis of specimens of dead feed fish for possible poisons that could effect the reproduction of the eagles.

Heartfelt thanks is due for all those who help in this study, both those mentioned and the many who were not. All the data will prove useful. Thanks!!



ADULT BALD EAGLE
Photo by Charles Broley

ONE ROBIN AND ESAU'S POTTAGE

WILLIAM YOUNG WORTH

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SIOUX CITY, IOWA

Lentils, blood sausage, and headcheese were all well liked and substantial foods of the early pioneers in this part of the West. Few people today ever eat the first-mentioned food, lentils. In fact I dare say (and this is no reflection on the present-day teenagers) that if asked what lentils are they would probable connect them with Easter or Lent.

Lentils are actually the flat seed of a legume and are similar in taste to a bean or a pea. When my mother, Lydia Bonekemper Youngworth, was brought over as a babe in arms by her parents from Switzerland, they also brought along the recipe for lentil soup. This was long one of their favorite soups and has also been a well liked food in our family to the present day.

Being out of doors in the cold of early April often makes the bird-watcher think of nice, hot lunch, and what could be better than a bowl of thick lentil soup? The lentils should be thoroughly washed and then put on to simmer, with plenty of diced carrots, celery, onion, and small cubes of ham or bacon. A thick soup such as this takes a lot of salt, so season to taste. Chopped parsley can also be added to this pottage for those who like that flavor.

Present-day refrigeration is very conducive to keeping left-overs too long. This happened with my last bowl of lentil soup. It was a small bowl of about a half pint and, although it was still edible, had lost its appeal. I almost regretfully dumped the thick remains under the bird feeder.

The birds ignored my offering. Several dozen Starlings, House Sparrows and Common Grackles fed all around the lentils, but completely passed them by, and in five days of close watching were never seen to touch the food. All was not lost, however, for suddenly one morning a fine male Robin cocked his head from the tree above, saw the lentils and flew down. From April 5 to April 9, this one Robin made regular trips to his private food supply.

I kept rather informal notes on his doings and some are given below. First, he always arrived just before 6 A.M., had his first feeding, and usually ate a meal late in the afternoon. Since the other birds weren't interested in the lentils, he could eat at his leisure and usually took from eight to eighteen mouthfuls of food. The average was usually about fifteen. Sometimes he flew to the bird-bath for a drink, but usually just moved off on his patrol of the lawn for insects.

The pile of cooked lentils kept getting smaller. Whether coincidence or not, on April 8, with snow falling and with a weather forecast of several inches of snow and colder, our Robin took to indulging in larger meals. Several times during the late afternoon he took from thirty to thirty-six mouthfuls of food at one sitting. The next morning, although I started my watch with dawn, the Robin did not appear. I kept the vigil until nine o'clock, when suddenly he appeared, ate several mouthfuls of food and flew off. Further watching was fruitless, so I walked out to look over the situation. I was amazed to find that on his last feeding he had cleaned the ground.

The question here of course is not whether Esau sold his birthright for a mess of lentils, but whether one bird was smarter than all the others and had discovered lentils were high in food value, loaded with proteins, and a dandy bulwark against the unseasonable cold of our April weather.

THE STORY OF PEETY

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When any living creature however small becomes involved with human beings, for one reason or another he is given a name. We called this Ruby-throated Hummingbird "Peety", because his baby mouselike "peet, peet" squeaks suggested it. He was about the size of a salted peanut with a bill on one end and a few stubby feathers on the other that gave promise of being a tail, when and if he survived the ordeal of being raised by hand.

The Ruby throat lays two eggs (sometimes only one) in a nest an inch deep and an inch across, made of spider silk, plant down, or lichens, and she hatches two broods a season, rarely three. She builds the nest and rears the young herself, the father seldom having anything to do with this responsibility.

Peety must have been one of an unusually late hatch, for Iowa had already felt the nip of fall when he was found in the grass by a little boy who brought him to me, because he could find no one else who cared to bother with him. How he came to be in that particular place is anybody's guess.

My family of bird lovers had raised baby owls, Blue Jays, Cedar Waxwings, Cardinals, and what-have-you, but this insignificant bit of life scarcely seemed worth the try. But try I did.

Although half dead from hunger he sucked a drop of honey and water from the tip of my little finger without hesitation, then another and another. In the course of an hour he became stronger, though his thread like legs could not support his weight, and his wings- if wings they could be called- could not lift him from the table, but spun him around like a top when he obeyed the instinct to use them. His squeaks were no louder than the ticking of a tiny clock. In a few days he could cling to the edge of a teaspoon and suck liquid from the spoon with as much zest as a child drinks an ice cream soda through a straw.

He gained control of his wings a little more each day, and he was growing amazingly fast. One day he suddenly lifted from the spoon, and his wings supported him in a whirring cloud until he had had his fill of honey. His unmistakable elation at this accomplishment was expressed by rapid, excited squeaks.

The next feeding he was offered both spoon and medicine dropper, and he chose the dropper, never again taking his nectar except on the wing. He refused any other form of nourishment that we could obtain, darting backwards in a huff, and scolding with rapid "chip, chip" squeaks if offered a substitute. He consumed about a teaspoonful of honey a day at this stage of his growth.

It did not require much imagination to detect his delight when he discovered that he could circle the room and come to rest with accuracy and ease on a curtain top, or on a wire dress hanger, which he claimed as his favorite perch. He did this over and over again after the first successful attempt, each time expressing his joy by excited squeaks, as though he were applauding himself.

Peety was a cocky fellow, with a temper not befitting his size when not allowed the run of the house, or when confined in a small makeshift cage for the night, or when we were to be out for a while. He was so small that

we could not run the risk of his getting into some tight place where we could not find him, or where he could not get out. He would spin backwards and forwards in the cage, scolding and doing his utmost to let us know what he thought of such an absurd contraption.

In a short time his back became a sparkling green, and his throat was showing dusky streaks. Peety was growing up on schedule. (the beautiful red throat does not appear until after the first complete molt in February, at which time he also trades in his immature rounded tail with the three white tipped outer feathers for a green forked tail.)

Only once did he try to fly through a window. He seemed to know thereafter it could not be done.

Peety became a most popular bird. Our friends no longer asked concerning our welfare when they phoned, but it was, "How is Peety?" Perhaps he was the only Hummingbird in the world to be invited to a dinner party (given by a hummer enthusiast.) He arrived in a kitchen match box, but was completely at ease upon being released. He was the chief attraction of the evening, perching on fingers, squeaking contentedly as though he were enjoying all the attention he received, scolding when an artificial flower failed to yield the desired nectar. He alighted on the rim of a coffee cup and fluffed his feathers as he always did prior to taking a bath. Our hostess filled a small ash tray with water and Peety was into it splashing with all his might, even before she could lower it to the floor.

By this time most of the flowers were dead or frost bitten, and we doubted the possibility of his making it on his own, out-of-doors. He had never fared for himself and knew nothing of the perils of freedom and it was late October. The hummers had left for the south the first week of the month. He appeared to be doing very well as it was, even though honey was not an adequate diet.

While we were still undecided, Peety began to spend much of his time watching his reflection in a mirror that rested on a shelf. He would sit quietly for more than an hour, scarcely moving, now and then calling wistfully.

He was no longer curious about strangers that came to the house, nor did he investigate flowers on the dresses they wore for their nutritional value. He had lost interest in everything except the bird in the glass. His calls were his tribal calls of distress: loud, clear and unhappy. Then one whole day he refused honey altogether.

We knew that the migrating instinct was calling Peety to sunny lands and to his own kind, and that he would certainly die before spring if we did not let him go. We would give him his chance, slim as it might be.

We took him to a sheltered place in the park where petunias were still blooming. He immediately went to the flowers and we were properly scolded when he failed to get nectar from the "medicine dropper" end of the petunias, and we knew that his fighting spirit had not deserted him. After a few unsuccessful attempts he reversed the procedure, and he was sinking his bill deep into the heart of the flowers.

We had underestimated Peety. All his pampering and attention had not robbed him of his innate wisdom of caring for himself. We were sure that he would lose no time in getting on his way to a warm climate, where he would rest for a spell and then he would attempt his 500 mile nonstop flight across the Gulf of Mexico. And knowing Peety we had not the slightest doubt that he would make it in record time.

Use of Road Ditches By Song Birds

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Road ditches in the portion of Iowa flattened by the more recent glaciers often times provide the only cover available to certain ground-nesting birds during the early nesting season. The relative importance of these road ditches, and in particular, the effect of county roadside weed spraying on Pheasant nesting is receiving special attention by the Iowa State Conservation Commission. I had an opportunity to learn something of the density of song bird nests in road ditches on a nine-square mile area near Latimer in Franklin County while helping with research which included a search for Pheasant nests in the road ditches.

All of the study area lies on flat terrain. It is heavily cultivated with principal crops being corn, oats, and alfalfa hay. Very little wasteland desirable for wildlife can be found in the area. Drainage ditches with the accompanying spoil banks comprise most of the wasteland. About the only cover available for certain ground-nesting birds early in the spring appears along the drainage ditches, in alfalfa hay fields, and in the road ditches. Fence rows offer little cover because of the practice by local farmers of cropping as close to fences as machinery can approach. Fence rows as narrow as 16 inches on either side of the wire are common in the area. Even these narrow strips are disturbed by the tractor wheels during normal farm operations. As a consequence, road ditches assume considerable importance to nesting wildlife.

Road ditches on the research area averaged 20 feet in width from the road edge to fence. Cover composed mostly of Kentucky bluegrass and smooth brome grass. Shrubs, trees, and forbs were infrequent, presumably because of the practice of weed spraying by county crews. No areas wet enough to support extensive stands of cattails, etc. were encountered.

The research was conducted May 22-24, 1961. Each road ditch in the nine square miles was searched thoroughly for Pheasant nests. This was accomplished by walking slowly two abreast, sometime three abreast, and searching every vestige of cover. Nests of song birds were not necessarily the objects of search. However, the writer feels most of those occupied at the time were found. Nearly 55.8 acres of road ditch cover were searched in all.

Thirteen occupied nests of song birds were discovered. Of these over six belonged to Meadowlarks. Five eggs appeared in each of four Meadowlark nests; one contained six, and another a single egg. None contained juveniles. In addition to the above, six unoccupied nests of Meadowlarks were discovered. One appeared to have destroyed by a predator. The other five seemingly were abandoned for reasons unknown.

Three nests of Vesper Sparrows were located. One contained one egg each of the Vesper Sparrow and a Cowbird. Another contained four Vesper Sparrow eggs plus two from Cowbirds. The third contained three juveniles. Nests of three pairs of Song Sparrows were discovered. One contained four eggs of the sparrows and two from parasitizing Cowbirds.

The aforementioned nests were more or less routine discoveries as they should be expected in such habitat in that area. However, one nest was found which was not expected. That one belonged to Brown Thrashers. It lay flush on the ground on the slope immediately adjoining the road in the confines of a diminutive wild rose spring which stood not more than 18 inches high. The nest was of the usual construction of sticks with a cup of fine rootlets. It contained four eggs. It is difficult to say why these birds chose nesting site so radically different from their usual choice of shrubbery and thorns. However, there did appear to be a dearth of suitable shrubbery nesting sites in the area.*

The observations mentioned here point out the obvious importance of road ditch nesting to song birds in many of our heavily cultivated rural areas. The 13 occupied nests represents one for every 4.3 acres of habitat. Perhaps the real rate of occupancy is higher as possibly a few song bird nests went undiscovered. The number of species was limited obviously because of the rather monotonous grass cover. If patches of brush or of cattails or other wetland vegetation had been available there can be little doubt other species would have been found.

*Footnote see page 68.

GENERAL NOTES REPORTS

The publication dates of *Iowa Bird Life* are such that the September issue covers the months of May, June, and July. Since this three-months period comprises the greater part of the spring migration and practically all of the nesting season, whatever information has been obtained concerning events after May 1 is presented here together with a few April observations.

April was the fourth coldest on record with an average temperature deficiency of 5.7 degrees at the Des Moines weather station, while Iowa City was 4.8 degrees below normal. May was generally dry and unusually cool also and spring was somewhat slow in coming to most of the state. As a result the migration was later than usual in some places, although Fred Kent at Iowa City thought "The spring arrivals set a steady and normal pattern." On April 16 on Credit Island Peter Petersen, Jr. found Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Myrtle Warblers were forced by blizzard conditions to feed on the ground, keeping behind trees to avoid the wind.

Kent's first warbler wave followed a cool front on May 4, with another from the 10th to the 13th. His check-list for these four days shows 75, 109, 100, and 123 species for a total of 157 which included twenty-four warblers. The first migrants were noted by Mrs. Beth Proescholdt at Liscomb on May 7 and May 10 but included few warblers. However, warblers made up a large percentage of the birds seen from the 11th to the 13th. Her biggest warbler day was the 16th, but a great many were also seen on the 18th. At Sioux City May 18 and May 19 were big warbler days, and William Youngworth listed sixteen species in Graceland Cemetery on the 19th. A number of other species hit their peaks from May 18 to May 20. The final influx of migrants at Iowa City was May 20 which was also the windup of Des Moines' biggest warbler wave. This started on the 17th, and on May 18 Mrs. Margaret Brooke, Mrs. Gladys Haskell, and Miss Mary Ellen Warters compiled a list of 102 species of which fifteen were warblers.

Cormorants, Herons. On April 29 there were ten Black-crowned Night Herons roosting in a cottonwood in Liscomb. This is a mile and a half from the Iowa River, and a mile from a gravel pit where they are often found. A Little Blue Heron found by Mrs. Brooke, Mrs. Jeannette Eyerly and Miss Warters near Polk City was the "bird of the day" for the Des Moines Spring Census on May 13. Two active nests of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron in Crocker Woods in Des Moines were watched. Eggshells, one containing an embryo, were found under the nests but no nestlings were observed, and it is questionable if any young were brought off. Petersen banded a Double-crested Cormorant out of a colony of eleven nests north of Lock 13, and two nestling Green Herons near Bettendorf.

Ducks. There were "good numbers" of ducks at Little Wall, Goose, and Big Wall Lakes in Hamilton and Wright Counties in April, according to Petersen. Ducks seem to have gone through Des Moines in a hurry, due possibly to a late departure from their wintering grounds, and fewer species with smaller numbers of individuals were seen. An unusual observation was that of two immature Hooded Mergansers on June 24 and 25 in a shallow pond formed by an overflow of Fisher's Lake. The Iowa City waterfowl report is much better, particularly with reference to species which had been considered dangerously low. In Kent's opinion there were as many Red-heads and Canvasbacks as in the past, with Wood Ducks even more numerous and early broods of the latter being seen. An unusual duck seen on a small marsh was studied with binoculars, and a later comparison of on-the-spot notes and sketches with reference works identified it as an European Wid-geon.

Hawks, Rails. On June 25 a Turkey Vulture was banded by Petersen near Monticello - a second escaped. A Peregrine Falcon preening in a field at Conesville was watched by Kent for twenty minutes. Another was seen by Petersen on April 30 at Big Marsh (Parkersburg). A flock of ten Broad-wings was seen there the same day. One of the rarest species in this part of the country is the Black Rail. On May 13, Dr. Tom Kent flushed one in a small marsh area and watched it fly off in front of him for fifty feet. One Common Gallinule was seen at Fisher's Lake, and another at Goose Lake near Jewell.

Shorebirds. A Piping Plover was at Amana on May 7. Semipalmated Plovers were observed at Liscomb on April 25, and at Des Moines on two days in the third week of May. Golden Plovers were seen at Liscomb on four occasions and at the Waterloo Airport during April, while there were several observations of the Black-bellied near Des Moines during May. Another observation was by Miss Mary E. Peck on May 21 at Little Wall Lake. The third week of June produced four Woodcocks for Kent who also reported a small flock of Sanderlings which stayed for a week. A flock of fifteen Ruddy Turnstones in the Iowa City area was unusual. These were also found near Des Moines, and at Little Wall Lake. Upland Plovers seem on the increase. There were two Willets at Liscomb on April 29, and three at the Waterloo Airport on April 30. Dowitchers were found at both places on April 30.

Doves, Cuckoos, Owls. Mourning Doves appear to have had a very successful nesting in Polk Co.; young are to be seen along all of the roads. Yellow-billed Cuckoos were a week late in reaching Iowa City, and around Des Moines the Black-billed, which usually follows the Yellow-billed, was

the earlier arrival. A Long-eared Owl was found by Kent on April 7 which is late for that area. He saw Short-eared eleven times in May and June, and one was seen carrying a mouse on June 22 (see longer note).

Woodpeckers, Flycatchers. Petersen reports Red-headed Woodpeckers as being more numerous, and they are also seen in numbers along all back roads in Polk Co. According to Youngworth Crested Flycatchers were quite late in arriving at Sioux City as none was seen until May 20. Phoebe's, whose scarcity has been a matter of some concern in the East and South, seem on the increase around Davenport, but little change either way has been noticed in recent years in Polk Co. The Wood Pewee was also late in Sioux City.

Swallows, Wrens. Three Tree Swallows were found across from Credit Island on Mar. 30. Bank and Rough-winged were also a little early in Sioux City, appearing on April 22. Carolina Wrens have been missing in Johnson Co. this past spring, but they came through the winter in Polk Co.

Mimic Thrushes, Thrushes, Kinglets. The 1961 Breeding Bird Census in Des Moines produced counts of 75 Catbirds, and 68 Brown Thrashers, compared with 41 and 45 respectively in 1960. There has been much discussion of the effect of DDT spraying on the Robin population, and the decrease from 134 adults and 7 juveniles in 1960 to 94 adults and 3 juveniles in 1961 might be considered as evidence. The number of immature Robins seen in Des Moines as late as mid-July this year has been only a fraction of the number seen in other years. Swainson's Thrushes seemed unusually late in Sioux City with the first arrival on May 15. Only eight of about forty Eastern Bluebird houses near Wildcat Den were occupied. This, one of the "disaster species," is coming back slowly, if at all. Youngworth found a Ruby-crowned Kinglet on April 5, his earliest in thirty-five years.

Vireos, Warblers. A White-eyed Vireo has been seen and heard repeatedly at the Des Moines Impounding Reservoir. The bird is evidently on territory, but no nest has been found. The Solitary Vireo in Sioux City on May 7 was Youngworth's earliest record. The warbler migration was, generally speaking, a good one. Cape Mays, which are not regularly seen in Johnson Co. appeared on May 20. Blackburnians were unusually numerous at Liscomb on May 19. A pair of Worm-eating at Ottumwa on the Sunday field trip was an interesting find, and a Kentucky, which is very rare in northwest Iowa was found in Sioux City by Youngworth on May 24. A most unusual Black-throated Gray at Sioux City is described elsewhere. Russell Hays on July 16 found a singing Cerulean at Bixby Park. This should be a nesting bird at this time. Waterthrushes were found at the same time. On May 13 Petersen found the rare Pine Warbler on Credit Island. Myrtles were in "short supply" at Sioux City. In the same area the Blackpoll, considered common ten years ago, was scarce. Canadas, on the contrary, were relatively numerous and Youngworth saw seven on May 19.

Icterids. Bobolinks appear to be on the increase in Polk Co. Kent had nesting Orchard Orioles the third week in June, and a male was seen feeding young in Polk Co. on June 25. Baltimore Orioles seemed unusually numerous around Des Moines during the early summer.

Tanagers, Fringillids. Summer Tanagers have been found nesting by Kent and also by Fred Leshar at Wildcat Den (see longer notes). Several of this species have been found in and near Des Moines but no nests have been located. Youngworth had Pine Siskins in arbor vitae trees almost daily from

March 11 until June 3. A small flock in Des Moines on June 10 was unusual. Goldfinches are reported as being scarce in Iowa City and Des Moines. A Savannah Sparrow in the third week of June at Iowa City is a late date. There was a good migration of Harris' Sparrows at Sioux City, but Clay-colored were seen only twice. White-throats were the only noticeably numerous sparrows around Des Moines.

Mrs. W. C. DeLong of Shenandoah again spent the summer in Rocky Mountain National Park where she was busy searching for nests. The nests of the Townsend's Solitaire and the Hermit Thrush were among the more unusual finds. Her biggest thrill, she says, was the banding of two baby Wilson's Snipes in a watery bog about fifteen feet from their nest.

Paul Doerder of Route 3, Boone, on May 28, 1961 was at Ledges State Park where Turkey Vultures are relatively numerous. While watching several vultures soaring over the park he saw one which was noticeably different from the others, and which closely resembled pictures of the Black Vulture. The only Black Vulture record for Iowa which comes to mind is DuMont's reference to one shot in 1933 near Perry, and it would be interesting to learn if there have been other observations of vultures which appear to be this species. WOODWARD BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

Unusual Behavior of a Cliff Swallow. On May 13, 1961, a group of Des Moines Audubon Society members visited a nearby sandpit which last year was the nesting site of a colony of Bank Swallows. While watching a flock of about 30 swallows excavating nesting holes in the bank it was noticed one of the birds had a buffy rump. This feature made it easy to follow the bird and when, after a short interval, it turned toward us the light forehead was immediately seen. The bird was unmistakably a Cliff Swallow, but its actions were identical with those of the Bank Swallows, and it would not have been noticed had it not been for the plumage differences. Scrutiny of the flock disclosed no other birds with similar markings.

The use of this type of nesting site is not unknown as Bent cites two similar instances. He quotes Townsend (1917) as saying Cliff Swallows have been known to breed in abandoned burrows of Bank Swallows, and Carpenter (1918) as having found several typical bottleneck mud nests built over entrances to old rooms of Bank Swallows. In one instance the eggs of the Cliff Swallow were found lying in a seaweed nest of the Bank Swallow. The present instance is not a case of the Cliff Swallow using an abandoned nesting hole as this time the holes were being excavated.

Unfortunately, no further observation of the Cliff Swallow was possible. When the place was visited a week later some men were using this sand bank as a backstop while target shooting, and the place had been deserted by all of the swallows. None was seen on a third visit to the same location. WOODWARD BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

(The editor noted a colony of about twelve pair of Cliff Swallows nesting in a very loosely-packed sand bank near Ellison Bay, Door Co., Wisconsin, on July 3, 1961. Twelve young were banded).

Brown Thrasher's Nest on the Ground. Dr. Robert Norton of Des Moines on June 11, 1961 found a nest in a location which for some reason is much rarer in Iowa than in certain other parts of the country. This nest, containing four eggs of the Brown Thrasher, was built under a picnic table in Spring Lake State Park near Jefferson.

Bent's **Life Histories** gives the results of several studies of nest locations chosen by the Brown Thrasher in various parts of the country. It is the consensus that the thrasher in the western and southern part of its range very seldom builds its nest upon the ground; only one out of 19 in Illinois, and one out of 109 in Tennessee were placed in this manner, but several nests found near Leech Lake in Minnesota were all "sunken in the ground after the manner of a Towhee's." In New England, particularly in southeastern Massachusetts, and in the vicinity of Boston, about half of the nests were on the ground, and Bent says "ground nests are of common occurrence, especially on the higher lands where the ground is warm and dry, and where the thrasher evidently prefers to nest." WOODWARD BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

Black-throated Gray Warbler at Sioux City. On May 18, 1961, Mr. Robert Nickolson of Sioux City called me to report a warbler concentration in Graceland Cemetery, so the following morning I drove out to the area. During the course of the morning I listed sixteen different kinds of warblers including one Black-throated Gray Warbler. I had just been watching some Black-and-white Warblers and some Blackpoll Warblers, when the above warbler came into view. The first thing I noticed was the black chin and throat and later the distinctive head markings and the gray back. The presence of the two above mentioned warblers made it much easier to decide what I was looking at.

This warbler is apparently a common transient in extreme western Kansas according to Harrison B. Tordoff, **Checklist of the Birds of Kansas**, 1956. A record a bit closer to Iowa was made by Dr. John D. Donahoe at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on May 22, 1948. Dr. Donahoe with Charles S. Hills watched a Black-throated Gray Warbler on the banks of the Big Sioux River for about fifteen minutes. See **South Dakota Bird Notes**, Volume 1, No. 2, page 35. Maybe birdwatchers in the Missouri River valley are passing up records of the Black-throated Gray Warbler by not scrutinizing every black and white looking warbler during the spring migration.—WM. YOUNG-WORTH, 3119 - Second Street, Sioux City, Iowa.



DR. ROBERT VANE AT ROBIN NEST ON GROUND

Photos by F. W. Kent

ROBIN NEST ON GROUND. Found by Dr. Robert Vane, (4 miles west of North Liberty) on edge of County road H. Photos taken on May 28, 1961. Observed several times—3 young fledged. F. W. KENT, 7 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa



IMMATURE EASTERN BLUEBIRD ASSISTING IN FEEDING

Photos by F. W. Kent

BLUEBIRD NEST—Second nesting, with young of first brood participating in feeding nestlings. Located $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Coufalls on County road. First seen on July 4 containing 4 eggs. Six observations from hatching on July 8 until fledging on July 23 of three young (one egg remaining). During the last week of observations the feeding trips were of the ratio of—male 8 times, immature 4, female 1. The female showed more concern over our presence (car 30 ft. from nest) than did the other two birds which might explain her rare feeding trips—or perhaps she had trained the daughter to take over the job? (F. W. KENT, 7 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa).

A Probate Nesting of Short-eared Owls in Johnson County. Short-eared Owls during the winter of 1960-61 fluttered over the abandoned fields of the bottom lands of the Coralville Reservoir area in numbers (6 to 12 per trip) even through the month of March. From past experience observations at dusk proved by far the most profitable in finding these birds so were continued into April, and two owls were found in a large field a mile west of Swan Lake regularly, inviting further watching for possible nesting. From the first week in April until the middle of August, some 24 trips were made to this area, usually at dusk, with at least one owl seen each time. For two months the pattern of activity was much the same. An owl would appear from the middle of the field and fly a regular route up and back the east and south side of the large field hunting and catching mice, occasionally resting on a post at north end of the field. Several forays afoot were made into this heavily weeded field without results, the most ambitious one a very hot day in June with Pete Petersen and Mike Yeast roping more than half the area. In mid July the pattern of activity changed with the bird, or two birds, going into adjacent fields to hunt. We had about concluded that these owls were a pair of non-nesting or first year birds just remaining in a good feeding territory when on July 25 an owl was seen bringing back mice, held in claws, three different times, coming in higher and going directly to a spot in middle of the field and then going out again soon without prey. Again on July 28 four such feedings were observed with two birds going to different locations, and a third owl was seen—one of young? We tried going into the field but darkness, the huge size of the field, and a mass of morning glories made it hard to pinpoint the exact location. F. W. KENT, 7 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa.

Second Nest of the Upland Plover at Lamoni. On May 27, 1961 I discovered a nest of Upland Plover for the second time. This nest was located only 100 yards from our dwelling, in a clump of heavy alfalfa on a terrace ridge at the edge of a plowed field. I was driving the tractor here and the bird suddenly flushed from directly under it. The rear wheel had missed the nest by only two inches! There were 4 eggs in the nest then. I visited the nest several times afterward. The brooding bird would allow me

to approach and stand directly over the nest. However, on June 4 I found the nest abandoned with only a damaged egg remaining. It seemed a little unusual for the plover to nest in this location when an entire 140 acre pasture was available nearby in which several pairs nested.

We might note here that a timothy field harvested for seed provides an ideal nesting location for this species. Both livestock and machinery are excluded until after July 15, which gives ample time for a plover to complete its long nesting period. Up to about 10 years ago there was extensive acreage of such timothy meadow in about 15 counties of south central Iowa. With the passing of the horse, much of this timothy has been replaced by alfalfa meadow, which is usually mowed during the first half of June. It is difficult to see how plovers could nest in a meadow which is mowed so early in the season.—J. DONALD GILLASPEY, Lamoni, Iowa.

BOOK REVIEWS

Penguin Summer by Eleanor Rice Pettingill. This very interesting account of Dr. and Mrs. Pettingill's trip to the Falkland Islands provides fascinating reading for all. It is very readable and well illustrated with Dr. Pettingill's photographs. Mrs. Pettingill's account of the many experiences will especially come alive to all who know the Pettingills.

This book is available from Charles N. Potter, Inc., New York, New York, for \$5.00. Anyone with an interest in birds would enjoy this book greatly. ed.

Ducks, Geese and Swans by Herbert H. Wong. One of the most beautifully illustrated junior books I have seen. The book was written primarily for west coast readers, but covers the entire country in its basic concepts. All species are discussed and illustrated, as well as diet, migration, refuges, other aquatic species, and an especially fine explanation of banding is included.

Available from J. B. Lippincott Company, East Washington Square, Philadelphia 5, Pennsylvania for \$2.95, this book is in the Sunset Junior Book Series. Illustrations were done by William D. Berry. ed.

Bird Songs in Your Garden by Arthur A. Allen and Peter Paul Kellogg, published by Cornell University Records, Ithaca, New York. This fine ten inch 33½ rpm vinylite record and illustrated book album is probably the most useful item this team of recorders has yet turned out. Twenty-five common species are covered, with a narrator identifying them on side one and no narration on side two. The order, earliest rising bird to last songster in the evening, is the same on both sides and in the text. All species are illustrated in the 53 photographs, 31 of which are in color.

The book portion also includes sections on plantings to attract birds, homes for birds, birds from the window, feeding, drinking and bathing, and reading references for gardeners. The twenty-four page booklet and record sells for \$5.95. This record would make a fine gift for a young person or one just entering the ranks of bird-watchers. ed.

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The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

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